


A VISIT TO THE  
GLASGOW  
Hospital for Sick Children.

GLASGOW:  
JAMES MACLEHOSE & SONS.  
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## THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.

THE Lady Superintendent told me lately that, in ordering supplies from first-class grocers and others, when she directed them to be sent to "The Sick Children's Hospital" she was met by the remark, "We did not know that there was an hospital for sick children in Glasgow." And the same has been said to myself by some in higher positions. The hospital has certainly not been long opened, but there it is now. Glasgow, which has been hitherto the only city of importance in Europe which had not such an institution—to our shame be it said—has redeemed her re-

putation, for she now possesses a child's hospital not only equal to, but, in many of its arrangements and equipments, superior to any in the kingdom—the chief hospital of all, that of Great Ormond Street, not excepted. One of the head nurses of that well-known institution, of which Her Majesty is patron, visited our hospital lately, and expressed her surprise and gratification. Her remark was “that it was in some things an improvement even on Great Ormond Street”; and a surgeon connected with two other great hospitals in London, who also lately paid us a visit, carried away with him notes of various particulars in which he said we were in advance of what they had in the metropolis. The Glasgow Hospital will not discredit its Royal patron the Princess Louise.

Let me ask the reader to come with me to Garnethill and have a look at it. Here it is

at the corner of Scott Street. No expense has been thrown away in ornamental architecture, but it is nevertheless a handsome, purpose-like building—cheerful-looking, and in an excellent airy situation. But let us go in. It is not the prescribed visiting hour, and we shall have the advantage, therefore, of seeing things as they usually are, without any special preparation for visitors. The genial and efficient Lady Superintendent receives us, and at once accepts our apologies, and offers to show us through the house and tell us all about it. The fresh, clean, cheerful look of everything is the first thing that strikes us. There is a beautiful stained-glass window in the staircase, the gift of a lady. The stained glass in the lower parts of the ward windows is the gift of children. A very fine musical box, which we afterwards heard play in one of the wards, to the great delight

of the little patients, was also a gift. The whole fitting up of the beautiful little mortuary apartment was also the gift of a kind and liberal friend. Everything extra and ornamental is a gift, for the directors are sorely in want of money, and cannot afford to lay out a sixpence on what is not absolutely necessary.

There are three wards, containing together 55 cots, and two pretty little swing cots for babies—in all, 57 cots. To-day there are in the house only 46 children. The Hospital is not generally known yet, and they have not had in it since the opening more than 49 children at one time. But in the short time since it was opened—less than six months—153 cases have been treated, including those now in the house. Many have been dismissed cured, and some have died; no wonder, as these were nearly all past hope when brought in. Yet it was well they were brought here.

If human skill could not save them, human skill, and loving careful nursing, alleviated their sufferings, and comforted their last days.

But here we are in Ward No. I., if we may call that a "ward" which is a cheerful, sweet apartment like a nursery. It contains nineteen cots and one baby cot, and is for the reception of general medical cases. How bright it is—how warm and airy—nothing of the hospital feeling or hospital atmosphere about it. And the children, how nice and clean, and even cheerful, most of them look. Their mothers, or guardians for the time being, took away the poor rags which they had on when brought in, and the children are now dressed in little scarlet jackets—the neat uniform of the hospital. The sad thing is to think of the places to which they must return when dismissed. Yet when the mother comes

to take away her child she will, as a rule, bring back the poor old clothes, carefully washed and mended, so far as her scanty means enable her to do. She is ashamed to have her child in dirty things after what she has seen in her visits to the hospital. The ward is a well-lighted apartment—the walls lined with cream-coloured tiles half-way up, and the rest clear delicate paint. We ask if they will accept some pictures to hang up. The matron thanks us, but says no. The most recent experience has proved, she says, that anything of this kind becomes a recipient of the germs which are found in all hospitals; but they will be glad to have picture-books for the children, and toys—these are always a source of delight to the little ones. But they should not be expensive, for after being some time in use they must be burned and replaced by new ones. The floors are of pine, varnished. The

cots are of iron, painted grey with neat clear brass fittings. They are arranged along each side of the ward, each with its head to the wall, and each is surrounded by a railing to keep the child from falling out—the ends and sides of which fold down to facilitate bedside dressing. Each has a wire woven mattress, which is not only comfortable, but, in a sanitary view, most healthy, and over this is a thin hair mattress. Across each cot, supported by the side rails, is a sliding board, on which food can be placed, and which serves to hold the toys and books and flowers in which the children delight. Many of the cots have now children in them. The others are for the convalescent children at present running about the ward. Three ladies are now in the ward. They have just brought a basket of flowers—their weekly gift every Wednesday. Two of them are arranging them, assisted by the little

convalescents, to whom this is a great treat. The other lady is sitting by a little sick girl, reading something nice and amusing to her. All the furniture and fittings of the ward are admirable.

And now we are joined by the resident medical officer, Mr. Walker, who had been described to us as not only efficient in his onerous duties, but genial with the children, and never failing to win their confidence and affection—qualifications essential in the nurses in a sick child's hospital, but not always to be secured in the doctor. Escorted by him and by the Lady Superintendent, let us now take a turn through the wards, though we can only notice here a few cases. Only one child is crying. It is a little girl, four years old, who is sitting up in her little bed, and stretching out her arms. "What is she crying for?" we ask. "It is for her 'mammy,'" the matron says.



Poor lamb, we think, that is a wish not to be gratified here. But we are mistaken. "Mammy" is a kind-hearted nurse, with a light womanly tread, and a pleasant, fresh face, who has won the child's confidence, as we are sure she has won the confidence of all the others. She has by this time got the little one in her arms, to relieve the weariness by a walk round the ward. The child's arm is round her neck, and the little face is now radiant with smiles. She had been very ill with inflammation of the lungs, but is now in the fair way of recovery. After a few turns the nurse puts her into the next cot, where she is set down facing its occupant, a fine little boy—Bobby. He is only three years old. His complaint was general debility, arising from neglect—dirt, starvation, and the absence of everything necessary for child life—and if not rescued in time he would have died. Treated in time, he is

fast getting better. The two children now sit facing each other, with the sliding board between them, covered with toys, and very happy they look. Standing near them is one of the convalescents—Frank—a boy of eight, but looking not more than five. His had also been a case of illness induced by great neglect. When brought to the hospital he was apparently dying, and he weighed only 1 st. 11 lb.—just 5 lb. more than the child of three years beside whom he is now standing. In six weeks he has, under careful treatment, gained 1 st. 3 lb.! Another life saved. But who is this little fellow, healthy-looking and comfortably dressed, who has just come into the ward? Is he a patient? No, the matron says, he *was* a patient; he is now only a visitor. His name is Innes, she says. He is eight years old, and she tells us his history—not at all an exceptional one. The sanitary inspector found him

one bitterly cold day in January in a low den in the East End—evidently very ill—in a place without fire, his rags not sufficient to cover him, and filthy beyond description. His only chance for life was removal to the hospital ; but on admission he was found to be in such a state of exhaustion that it was doubtful if he could survive the night. By very careful treatment, however, he survived through a prolonged attack of acute bronchitis. He left the hospital quite restored—not in the rags in which he was brought, but in his present suit, the gift of a kind lady ; and now he has come to see his former companions, who are crowding round him with glad welcome.

We now pass three cots, in each of which is a very little child. They are all sleeping soundly, and we do not stop to disturb them by inquiries, and the other cases we must pass over that we may go to the ward above—

No. II. This is the surgical ward, and all the children now in it either have been, or are about to be, operated upon. Sad to say, it is the most crowded of all the wards. It contains, like the one below, 19 cots, but there are just now 21 children in it, the "sister" who has charge of the ward explaining that two of the convalescents "sleep out," being sent for the night to one of the less crowded wards. One would suppose that this would be a very sad ward to go into. But no. The room, like the other, is bright, and not one child in it bears an expression of pain or uneasiness. Yet they are all, or have been, urgent cases where either death, or deformity for life, would have followed had they not been brought here. Let us notice a few of them.

Here are two in adjoining cots—Nellie, an interesting child of 10, and Polly, another fine girl of 11. Both have been recently operated

upon : the first by excision of the knee joint, and the other for hip disease ; and both are now fast recovering. Nellie is a very industrious little girl, always working at something. So is Polly. She cleans the scissors and other instruments, teases out the tow, rolls bandages, and sews a great deal—hemming towels and making petticoats for little girls. Quite an industrious little maiden. Here comes to meet us a little boy, Jamie, from Helensburgh. When brought here his feet were quite turned inwards. He could hardly walk, and one foot, as he did so, went over the other. A skilful operation has been performed by the removal of a bone from each ankle, which enabled the feet to be turned round into the natural position. They are now encased in steel splints, until they get confirmed in the proper set. The operation took place three months ago, and he is now moving about the ward. The splints

will soon be removed, and then he will be all right—the deformity gone—and the child able to walk like any other boy. A little girl near us has been promoted from her cot to a couch—the gift of a kind lady—on which she is now reclining. She had suffered an operation for disease of the spine. When first admitted she could only lie on her face, and she remained in that position for weeks. The cause of disease has now been removed, and she is rapidly getting better. She has got a large edition of Noah's Ark before her, from which she is handing out the animals to little convalescent companions, and these are arranging them on the floor in long lines for our special edification. We are next introduced to little Tommy, the pet of the ward—a bright little fellow three years old. His was a bad case of diseased elbow-joint. The whole joint has been successfully excised, and he is now nearly recovered.

He runs about, and the nurse obliges him to use the arm—the other being for this purpose tied behind him. He will (by muscular power) be able to use the injured arm as well as ever, and even already he can raise and bend it with ease. In the next cot is a pretty little boy—Sandy, four years old. He has been operated on for hip-joint disease, and to prevent the limb from contracting, and to keep it still and straight, a cord is attached to the bandaged leg connected with a weight passing over a wheel at the foot of his cot. But it does not in the least hurt him. He is now lying on his back looking at us, quite bright and happy, but when the time for dressing the wound comes he gets under a cloud, and always appeals to the kind doctor to be very short. “Oh, doctor,” he says, “don’t be more than five hours for I’m just going to dee.” Poor little fellow ! five minutes probably more



than suffices for the dressing, and then he is bright and happy again. He will soon be quite well.

But our time is limited, and we must ascend another stair to ward No. III., this, like No. I., being for general medical cases. It is the brightest of all the wards. The sun is shining into it, and everything is, like the others, suggestive of quiet and rest and comfort. Here we are interested to find that one of the swing cots has an occupant, a dear little baby boy, ten months old—at present the pet of the house. He was taken in suffering from paralysis, in the hope that by judicious treatment at this early age he may be cured. Standing near is a very interesting-looking girl of ten, who was brought in suffering from the complaint known as St. Vitus's dance, brought on, poor thing, by overwork at school—not work imposed on her, but originating in her own earnest desire for



improvement, and to obtain distinction. She had passed the fourth standard in the Board school, and was trying for the fifth, when her nervous system became affected, and she was seized with this painful complaint. She is better already, and the doctor has every hope that she will, before long, be completely cured. Here in another cot is a poor little boy who was brought in five weeks ago with all the symptoms of consumption—induced by neglect, foul air, and want of proper food—his mother a poor woman, earning only eight shillings a week, and living in a low, unhealthy cellar. The child is already better, and within the short space of four weeks he has gained ten pounds in weight.

Hitherto all has been pleasant, but now we are startled by a face in one of the cots on the opposite side of the room. It is, on our sudden sight of it, something appalling to look at.

The eyes are fixed and glazed, and the whole expression most unhealthy and painful. In alarm we cross the floor to have a nearer look at this wretched child—not observing that some of the little convalescents are regarding us with amused looks. No wonder. On coming near we find that the object of our anxiety is a large doll which the mischievous little urchins had tucked into an unoccupied cot, and dressed up in all the trappings of a sick child. So big a doll, or one with so large a face, we had certainly never seen. Other cases, however—alas! too real and too sad in their history—recall us from this little episode. Into the particulars of these we have not space to enter. Almost every case of bad health and diseased and distorted limbs is traceable to preventable causes, and the want of the treatment which only an hospital like this can supply to the very poor.

But it is time for us to go. Returning to the first ward, the Lady Superintendent asks if we would like to hear the children sing one of their hymns. Of course we should be too glad to hear them, and thereupon the little voices join, in really beautiful harmony, in singing "Lord, a little band and lowly." Every night prayers are offered in each ward, very short prayers, suited to the capacities of children, followed by the prayer of prayers, "Our Father."

A visitor to the hospital lately, after looking at the bright wards and the children in them, asked in wonder, "Are all these really the children of poor people?" Yes, all; and the reader, sitting amid the happy circle of his own well-nourished and well-clothed dear ones, will not readily imagine, if he has not seen, the places from which most of the children now before us have been brought and the need

they had of hospital treatment. It is the old story. There is nothing exceptional in the state of the poor in Glasgow. Charles Dickens' description of what he once saw in Edinburgh is just as applicable to our own city—more so, indeed. Let us accompany him on a visit which he paid to one of the places of which we have been speaking. "Our way," he says, lay from one to another of the most wretched dwellings—reeking with horrible odours—shut out from the sky—shut out from the air—mere pits and dens. In a room in one of these foul places where there was an empty porridge-pot on the cold hearth, with a ragged woman and some ragged children crouching on the bare ground near it—where I remember, as I speak, that the very light, reflected from a high, damp-stained, and time-stained house wall, came trembling in, as if the fever which had shaken everything else there had shaken

even it—there lay in an old egg-box, which the mother had begged from a shop, a little, feeble, wasted, wan, sick child. With his little wasted face, and his little hot, worn hands folded over his breast, and his little bright, attentive eyes, I can see him now, as I have seen him for several years, looking steadily at us. There he lay in his little frail box, which was not at all a bad emblem of the little body from which he was slowly parting—there he lay quite quiet, quite patient, saying never a word. He seldom cried, the mother said; he seldom complained; he lay there “seemin’ to wonder what it was a’ about.” God knows, I thought, as I stood looking at him, he had his reasons for wondering—reasons for wondering how it could possibly come to be that he lay there left alone, feeble and full of pain, when he ought to have been as bright and as brisk as the birds that never got near him

—reasons for wondering how he came to be left there, a little, decrepid old man, pining to death, as if there were no crowds of healthy and happy children playing on the grass under the summer's sun within a stone's throw of him; as if there were no bright, moving sea on the other side of the great hill overhanging the city; as if there were no great clouds rushing over it; as if there were no life, and movement, and vigour anywhere in the world—nothing but stoppage and decay. There he lay looking at us, saying in his silence. more pathetically than I have ever heard anything said by an orator in my life, 'Will you please to tell me what this means, strange man? and if you can give me any good reason why I should be so soon so far advanced upon my way to Him who said that children were to come into His presence, and were not to be forbidden—but who scarcely meant, I think, that

they should come by this hard road by which I am travelling.' Many a poor child, sick and neglected, I have seen since that time, but at all such times I have seen my poor little drooping friend in his egg-box, and he has always addressed his dumb speech to me, and I have always found him wondering what it meant, and why in the name of a gracious God such things should be." Now, to my friend who reads this let me say—still using the words of Charles Dickens—he was pleading at the time for a Sick Children's Hospital—"such things need not be, if there is in you a drop of the life blood of a compassionate heart, if you will only accept the means of rescue and prevention which it is ours to offer. I speak," he said, "not only on behalf of the many children who annually die in this great city, but also on behalf of the thousands of children who live half developed, racked with preventible pain, shorn of their



natural capacity for health and enjoyment." Had Charles Dickens been speaking now *in* Glasgow, and *of* Glasgow, he would not have required to change one syllable of these awfully suggestive words. Of the children I have been speaking of to-day a large proportion came from such "wretched dwellings, reeking with horrible odours," as Mr. Dickens describes, many of them without even the luxury of an egg-box—filthy to such an extent, as the medical officer told us to-day, that it often seems impossible to get the dirt removed, and where shaving of the head is frequently a necessary expedient in order to get rid of the parasites which have been so long chronic there. No wonder that so many children have been growing up in Glasgow diseased and deformed when Glasgow had no hospital to offer them. No wonder that when this hospital was first projected, 50 per cent. of all the deaths in



Glasgow were of children under five years. Much of this will be prevented in future if the hospital, with an efficient Dispensary, is well supported. It is sad, no doubt, to think of the return of the children from these bright wards with all their cleanness and comfort and quiet to the squalid places from which they were brought. But there are encouraging facts in connection with it. Experience has shown that the effect of such hospital treatment has been that the mothers or friends of the little sufferers, coming to see them in their unusual surroundings, as they so often do, carry home with them altered feelings—a humanising influence which comes to tell on their home arrangements; and that even on the children themselves there is produced, in not a few instances, an influence for good which remains with them and which materially affects their future life.

I have said that the Glasgow Hospital is much in need of funds—not the usual annual subscriptions which our citizens will give so readily—but capital to meet the outlays of a newly founded institution. The Directors have not yet been able, for want of means, to establish a Dispensary, that essential adjunct of a child's hospital. The numbers that can be treated in the hospital must be comparatively few, but, for one treated there, thousands can, at a well-equipped Dispensary, receive a great amount of relief, mothers bringing their children and getting advice and medicine besides visits at their own homes. In Great Ormond Street the number treated in one year as in-patients was less than 700, while the number of out-patients treated was 12,000. But for all this, money is urgently required. Need I say more to secure many and liberal contributions. The Archbishop of York said truly

that a children's hospital had the best claim of all hospitals on our sympathy. Just look at your own children with all their comforts, and then think of the little sufferers among the poor, like the child in the egg-box, and think then of the words of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these you have done it unto me."

